



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LANSING

BRIAN CALLEY
LT. GOVERNOR

February 23, 2012

Dear Parent,

The State of Michigan is working hard to help address the fiscal crisis facing the Highland Park School District (HPS) and most importantly, ensure the well-being and education of your child. Per my previous letter, I said I would keep you updated to make sure you had the latest information and that you heard it directly from me.

I have been personally involved in reviewing the district's challenges. Sadly, the situation is dire. Despite three special hardship or cash advances that have totaled nearly \$5 million over the past seven months, HPS once again faces a payless payday for its teachers and staff this week.

When a team from the state was sent to independently review and assess the financial situation, its members unanimously concluded that the district was in immediate need of assistance if it was to remain open. Ultimately, I authorized and sent an emergency manager – Jack Martin – to help.

However, the HPS school board delayed this process and continuing lawsuits are hampering resolving both the process and our assistance. That is their right. However, this litigation is restricting our options, and diverting time and attention from helping your child get the education he or she needs and deserves. We've had to temporarily pull the emergency manager from HPS and have reconvened the review team. This all takes time.

That said, our commitment to help your kids finish this school year is stronger than ever. We will not quit on your child or their education. While we work through the legal process, we are partnering with the Legislature on two immediate actions:

1. Creating an agreement with another school district or charter school operator to run HPS and offer your child the ability to continue with their teacher in their classroom or building;
2. Giving your child the opportunity to transfer to another district or school that has space with special funding called a stipend that would go to that school of your choice and follow your child.

We realize that these may not be perfect solutions, but they are solid solutions that help address a very complicated, tough situation. Please know that our primary goal is to ensure your child and family face as little disruption and have as many options as possible.

You will continue to receive communication from us as these options become more clear and we can implement them. One way for doing so will be a public meeting, details of which will be announced soon through letters and e-mails to parents. This open forum will give you the opportunity to get answers directly.

And please, if you have questions, concerns, comments or ideas, please contact my office at 517-335-7858. You can also visit a website created specifically to share information and updates: michigan.gov/highlandparkschools. We all must work and come together for the good of all HPS kids and their futures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Snyder".

Rick Snyder
Governor